Conversion of dry latrines into wet latrines

4496. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state: .

(a) whether Government have adopted a definite time frame for conversion of dry latrines into wet ones in the rural areas of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the fresh steps taken to demolish all the dry latrines in rural areas of the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ANNASAHEB M.K. PATIL): (a) No, Sir. However, Government is assisting the State Governments for early conversion of all dry latrines into wet ones in the rural areas of the country.

(b) and (c) There are no fresh step taken to demolish all the dry latrines in rural areas of the country. However, Government has restructured the Central Rural Sanitation Programme in 1999 and revised Guidelines have been issued for implementing the Programme. States and U.T. Governments have been directed to utilise the funds allocated to them for conversion of dry latrines. As per the latest reports received from the States, dry latrines are in existence in six States and U.Ts. only, namely, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Rajasthan, Sikkim and Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

Responsibility for cultivation of barren land

†4497. SHRI KAPIL SIBAL:
SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the responsibility for making the entire wasteland in the country cultivable has been entrusted to an institute by Government by integrating all the existing plans;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, the name of such institute and the reasons for giving preference to the above institute for such responsibility; and

(c) by when the wasteland is targeted to be made cultivable together with the area of the same?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ANNASAHEB M.K. PATIL): (a) No, Sir. (b) Question does not arise.

(c) As per Wastelands Atlas of India 2000 (brought out by the Department of Land Resources in collaboration with National Remote Sensing Agency, Hyderabad employing Satellite Remote Sensing Technologies), the total extent of wastelands in the country is 63.85 m. ha. Wastelands are degraded lands, which are currently under-utilized and are deteriorating for lack of appropriate water and soil management or on account of natural causes. Therefore, agricultural operations are generally not feasible on such lands at the first stage of development. The Department of Land Resources has the mandate to develop wastelands rather than to convert wastelands into cultivable lands. It is implementing three major Schemes *viz.* the Integrated Wastelands Development Programme (IWDP), the Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP) and the Desert Development Programme (DDP) for development of wastelands/degraded lands on watershed basis *w.e.f.* 1.4.1995. New projects covering 139.73 lac hectares have been taken up under these Schemes from 1.4.95 to 31.3.2002.

Issuance of BPL cards to the poor

4498. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that poorest of the poor in all villages have been issued the BPL Cards;

(b) if so, whether it is also a fact that several BPL Card Holders belong to creamy layers and BPL; and

(c) the action proposed for proper audit to ensure issue of BPL Cards to all needy?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI SUBHASH MAHARIA): (a) to (c) Ministry of